Newsletter of Deccan Birders (formerly Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh)
New Series Volume 23 Number 1 January 2026

FIELD TRIP-1: Sunday, January 18, 2026, 6.45AM: Manjeera WLS & Reservoir. Meeting Point(s): Allwyn Crossroad Foot Overbridge, 05:15AM; BHEL Bus Stop, 05:30AM; Taj Dhaba, Muthangi, 05:45AM. Coordinator(s): Sathwik Reddy (Mobile: 99858-07186)

Manjeera Wildlife Sanctuary and Reservoir is a man-made reservoir that provides drinking water to Hyderabad and Secunderabad. It has nine small islands that host a variety of habitats and species. The sanctuary is home to more than 70 species of birds, including large flocks of Common Teal, Cotton Pygmy-goose, Ruddy Shelduck, Painted Stork, Eurasian Coot, Black-crowned Night Heron, and many more. Also, Manjeera Dam and surrounding fields are good viewing points for finches, wagtails, ibises, munias and more. The area is also home to various species of birds – look out for Watercock, Red-necked Phalarope, Bluethroat, Small Minivet, Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Rain Quail, Jungle Bush Quail, Rock Bush Quail, Barred Buttonquail, Painted Francolin, Baya Weaver, Black-breasted Weaver, Tricoloured Munia, Black-headed Bunting, Red-headed Bunting etc. This will be a half-day trip, so carry adequate water and breakfast/snacks, and protective gear if required.

INDOOR EVENT: Friday, January 23, 2026, 6.30PM: Talk by Dr Asad Rahmani, Former Director, BNHS: Love Of Writing Natural History Articles. Venue: Cafeteria, Manjeera Trinity Corporate, Adjacent to Lulu Mall, KPHB, Hyderabad. Event Coordinator(s): Sudhir Moorti (Mobile: 89776-13055); Location Coordinator: Ramesh (Mobile: 98666-13055)

Dr Asad Rahmani is former Director of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and one of India's foremost conservationists and ornithologists. With over four decades of fieldwork, writing, and conservation leadership, Dr Rahmani has spent a lifetime giving voice to India's birds, grasslands, wetlands, and the many lesser-known species that depend on them. In this session, Dr Rahmani will explore the art, passion, and purpose of writing natural history, how field observations migrate into meaningful stories, why patience is as important as punctuation, and how good writing can become a powerful conservation tool. The talk will be followed by an open interaction and Q&A, where curiosity is encouraged to chirp freely.

February 2026

FIELD TRIP-1: Sunday, February 01, 2026, 7.30AM: Rudrur Lake (Pedda Cheruvu), Nizamabad Dt. Meeting Point(s): Taj Dhaba, Muthangi, 04:00AM. Coordinator(s): Gowthama Poludasu (Mobile: 94409-10967)

Rudrur is a village tank (freshwater lake) located in Rudrur Mandal of Nizamabad District, Telangana, set within a predominantly rural and agricultural landscape. The habitat of Rudrur Lake is a mosaic of open shallow water, marshy edges, and vegetated margins. Exposed mudflats and damp shorelines become important feeding grounds for small shorebirds like waders and stints. Surrounding farmlands, scrub patches, and uncultivated fields further enhance the habitat by providing additional foraging areas and safe roosting sites, particularly for ducks, geese, and passerines. Although Rudrur Lake is not formally designated as a bird sanctuary, it is locally recognised by birdwatchers as an important wintering and stopover site. The lake attracts a diverse assemblage of waterfowl and wetland birds, especially during the winter migration period, when migratory species arrive from Eurasian and Central Asian flyways. Notable species to watch for include Greylag Goose, Comb Duck, Little Stint, Eurasian Teal, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Eurasian Wigeon, and Lesser Whistling Duck, among others. The seasonal nature of the lake, coupled with its strategic location among regional wetlands, supports high avian diversity and makes Rudrur a rewarding site for winter birding in inland Telangana.

This will be a half-day trip, and we plan to start our return journey to Hyderabad by around 12:00PM. Of course, those who wish to stay back and continue birding in the area are welcome to do so at their own convenience. Please note that the areas we will be visiting include farmlands and lake beds, where conditions may be muddy or slushy. We strongly advise wearing gumboots or rubber boots to handle the slush comfortably, or making suitable footwear arrangements as per your preference. Carry adequate water and breakfast/snacks, and protective gear if required.

For both field trips mentioned above, non-members are most welcome; however, they are requested to contribute Rs. 100/- per person to the Deccan Birders kitty. New Deccan Birders hats and caps will be available for purchase; please carry adequate cash.

WHERE SKY MEETS WINGS AND WILDERNESS
Trip Report: Bhigwan, October-November 2025

Text & Photos: N Shiva Kumar

Short-toed Snake Eagle pair

One fine day, we rolled out at 4:00AM, long before sun-up, giving ourselves time for relaxed tea halts, roadside banter and the comforting rustle of snack packets which is part of any Indian highway journey. The road ahead lay quiet, still wrapped in pre-dawn indigo, while our spacious vehicle hummed steadily under the weight of camera gear, tripods, beanbags, binoculars and luggage packed with more excitement than clothes. We had promised ourselves four action-packed, indulgent safaris at Bhigwan, and the cosy little hotel near the highway seemed the perfect anchorage for our birding odyssey.

Most travellers speak of Bhigwan as if it were a single dot on the map. But step into its geography and a far more intricate mosaic reveals itself. The region is a living tapestry where grasslands, drylands, wetlands and agricultural fields merge into a grand stage of life. Rashin, Kadbanwadi, Baramati etc – each grassland patch lies about 40 km away in a different direction, each harbouring its own specific wilderness and wildlife. Only the backwaters sit close to town, a short, breezy drive away, unfolding suddenly into a vast, shimmering expanse that seems to swallow the horizon whole. Open-boat rides ferry you straight into the kingdom of the water birds and waders.

Unfortunately Bhigwan's most iconic visitors, the flamingos were yet to arrive... But still we loved Bhigwan so much that we returned within a month. Both trips were long but effortless 7-hour drives, about 470km from Hyderabad, on well-laid national highways just 100km short of Pune in Maharashtra. The first tour was in the last week of October 2025, when winter migrants had just begun arriving, and the second in late November 2025, when the wetlands were brimming with bird life. Each time, we reached just around lunchtime, freshened up quickly, and gobbled our food. By 3:00PM we were ready with a battery of cameras, our heads tucked into cosy caps, and plenty of water to keep us hydrated for the safaris.

Beckoning Backwaters

By the time the clock nudged past 3:00PM, the golden hour had already begun draping Bhigwan's backwaters in liquid sunlight. The lake, calm and composed with hardly a ripple, almost sighed in welcome. Every afternoon safari felt like stepping into a world you think you know, only to realise that nature has rearranged the script entirely – a bewildering wilderness.

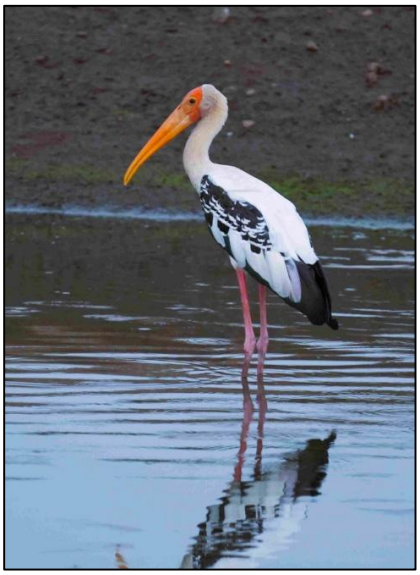
Having engaged one of the local guides at Bhigwan, we were ready to venture into the wilds. A multitalented young lad in his mid-twenties, and an enthusiastic naturalist, Akshay knows his birds, beasts, and the lay of the land with effortless confidence. On the day, he single-handedly eased the wooden vessel off the shore, the oar slicing through the still water in a soft, unhurried rhythm. A mild, earthy fragrance wafted from the wetlands, one of those scents you soon learn to associate with life itself. The lake stretched ahead like a giant mirror, holding clouds, colours, birds, and time suspended on its glassy surface.

Soon, the migratory ducks began their symphony, beautifully juxtaposed against the calls of the resident waterbirds. Great masses of Shovelers, Gadwalls, Teals, and Pintails lifted in swirling formations, circling the lake in shimmering ribbons. The sound of hundreds of wings cutting the air is something no camera can truly capture. In their gleaming white plumages, scores of Gulls and Terns hovered over the waters, hungry and hopeful, as the lake was full of fish and life seemed generous that morning.

Eurasian Spoonbill

Black-winged Stilt

Closer to the aquatic reeds and weeds, Grey and Purple Herons, long-legged Stilts, Egrets, Herons, Spoonbills and Painted Storks, delicate as brushstrokes, tiptoed along the waterline.



Painted Stork

Great Egret

Meanwhile the beautiful black Cormorants, Coots and Darters sliced the shallow waters with their alert outlooks. Sometimes the Herons and Ibises broke the monotony with sudden, lazy flaps, their reflections trailing them like slow-moving shadows.

The highlight of the evening was the powerful fish-eating raptor, a lone Osprey, its talons curved like heavy hooks and its beak bent like a polished sickle. From a distance it seemed like just another raptor resting, but as our boat drifted closer, its calm silhouette sharpened. In its striking black-and-white plumage and gleaming sharpshooter eyes, it suddenly opened its wings and lifted off. Only then did we realise, with a pleasant surprise, that it was clutching a massive half-eaten fish. The moment felt almost theatrical, nature displaying, with effortless finesse, the eternal dance between hunter and hunted.

Osprey

As the sun dipped toward the horizon, the entire lake turned surreal. Thousands of Rosy Starlings gathered, stirring in elegant, synchronized waves until they merged into a single living entity. It was roosting time, and as always, they treated the sky to a prolonged, mesmerizing performance before settling, only to rise again like a fast-moving cloud. They were enacting the celebrated murmuration, an exceptional bird behaviour in some species. Their silhouettes, backlit by molten gold, etched a memory we knew would stay with us forever.

It wasn't just birdwatching, it was a timeless performance, delicate yet powerful, stirring emotions we didn't know we carried. A moment where wilderness, rhythm, and raw beauty blended seamlessly across the open water world.

Gossamer Grasslands

If the backwaters of Bhigwan are poetry, then the grasslands are its prose, raw, earthy, unvarnished, and gloriously unpredictable. At Rashin and Kadbanwadi grasslands, early mornings and long evenings stretched out like sepia-toned frames. Tall, tawny grasses swayed with an ancient rhythm, hiding secrets that revealed themselves only to patient, observant eyes. Step into these rolling hills and plains and suddenly the landscape begins to breathe, alive with untold episodes from the wild.

Montagu's, Pallid, and Marsh Harriers performed low sweeping flights, barely inches above the ground, scanning for the slightest quiver of life below. Their wings sliced through the stillness like silent arrows of dusk, offering no hint of their presence. Overhead, Kestrels held their signature pose, hovering motionless in midair, every feather taut with concentration as they studied the earth for the faintest flick of prey.

Thousands of Larks appeared and disappeared in a heartbeat, hopping, skittering, and scurrying with nervous bursts of energy.

With a Near Threatened status worldwide the elegant Indian Coursers either scampered away or froze into perfect statues. Only our long lenses, with their relentless eye-tracking precision, caught them posing for us. And then, in a fleeting phantom of movement, the Indian Fox would materialize, russet, nimble, elegant, darting between clumps of grass, its bushy tail catching the last gold of the sun like a brush dipped in bronze. At times it would stop and give out a shrill howl-like growling scream for its unseen fellow friends. Fascinatingly these Indian Foxes, according to scientists, have nearly 30 different vocalization calls used for various purposes – it is a language by itself.

Sunset at Bhigwan

One evening, at the cusp of sunset, when the world softened into bluish half-light, we watched groups of migratory Harriers drift across the sky like a whisper, silent, smoky, effortless. Unlike many birds, they prefer to rest and roost directly on the grasslands, gathering for a night's repose under the star-lit sky. That moment, their collective, soundless surrender to darkness, felt worth the entire journey.

Even the wind behaved differently here, as it was crisp, cool, sharper around the edges, tinged with the faint scent of drying earth. The grasslands seemed empty at first glance, yet they offered wonder in the yonder every few minutes, miracles revealed not by movement, but by the simple act of pausing to look. A chinkara would suddenly give us a fleeting view only to vanish into the grasslands in its galloping gait known as stotting.

Nostalgic Nights

Back at the hotel, nights were filled with that familiar hum only birders understand. The day's dust was brushed off the camera gear, and batteries were lined up for charging. Memory cards were swiftly examined with equal parts hope and heartbreak but all downloaded on to hard discs. Silence followed when a particularly stunning frame appeared on someone's screen. Tea was always brewing; so was our anticipation and plans for the next morning – made and remade to satisfy our trigger-happy state of mind.

By 5:00AM, the ritual began again. The world was still asleep, but we were already on the road, driving into that magical hour when the horizon first begins to glow and Bhigwan prepares to unveil yet another day of marvels.

Fulfilling Finale

In the end, Bhigwan became far more than a simple satisfying birding spot. It grew into a pilgrimage, a place that gently resets the senses. Every moment stitched itself into memory, the chilled air of those 4:00AM starts, the comfort of hot tea in steel flasks, the long straight highways. The first glimpse of the lake through the vegetation, the thrill of spotting a flurry creature in hurry as a blur, the hush that fell every time a thousand wings rose together.

Bhigwan gave us more than sightings. It gave us stories – momentary, delicate, powerful stories of a wild world functioning in perfect rhythm. Stories of colour, chaos, stillness and movement. Stories that made us pause and breathe a little slower or a little faster.

As we drove back to Hyderabad, the mind replayed every flight of the raptors or a duck afloat or that rapid mesmerising murmuration, every fox sprint, every hiding hyena, every quiet moment on the boat when the world seemed to pause.

Rodeos Return

Because Bhigwan doesn't merely show you birds and beasts, it reawakens something within you. It offers a rare stillness, a sense of belonging to something timeless, raw, pure and unhurried… Something far larger than the frantic carousel of everyday life. It reminds you that beyond the choking cities and restless highways lie virgin grasslands, undulating horizons and gentle lakes waiting under the rising sun. And sometimes, in that quietness, a massive raptor, like the Short-toed Snake Eagle, Spotted Eagle, or White-eyed Buzzard would be visible. A Shikra or even a lightning-swift Peregrine or Red-necked Falcon would make a lofty skydive, as if calling you back, urging you to return and witness its wild magic all over again. When the Flamingos fly in, in about a month's time, we will certainly ride in like the rodeos.

Short-toed Snake Eagle

A signboard near Bhigwan

The list of birds seen during the trip:

OCTOBER 2025					
Sl No	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**	**Rashin Grasslands**	**Karkhel, Baramati**	**Bhigwan**
1	Ashy Prinia	*Prinia socialis*		Y	Y
2	Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark	*Eremopterix griseus*	Y	Y	
3	Asian Green Bee-eater	*Merops orientalis*	Y	Y	Y
4	Asian Koel	*Eudynamys scolopaceus*	Y	Y	Y
5	Asian Openbill	*Anastomus oscitans*			Y
6	Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*			Y
7	Baya Weaver	*Ploceus philippinus*		Y	Y
8	Bay-backed Shrike	*Lanius vittatus*	Y	Y	
9	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*	Y	Y	Y
10	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	Y	Y	
11	Black-crowned Night Heron	*Nycticorax nycticorax*			Y
12	Black-headed Ibis	*Threskiornis melanocephalus*			Y
13	Black-winged Kite	*Elanus caeruleus*	Y	Y	Y
14	Black-winged Stilt	*Himantopus himantopus*	Y		Y
15	Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	*Merops persicus*			Y
16	Brahminy Kite	*Haliastur indus*			Y
17	Brahminy Starling	*Sturnia pagodarum*		Y	Y
18	Common Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	Y	Y	Y
19	Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*			Y
20	Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*		Y	Y
21	Common Sandpiper	*Actitis hypoleucos*			Y
22	Coppersmith Barbet	*Psilopogon haemacephalus*		Y	
23	Eastern Cattle Egret	*Ardea coromanda*		Y	Y
24	Eurasian Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	Y		Y
25	Eurasian Coot	*Fulica atra*			Y
26	Eurasian Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	Y	Y	
27	Eurasian Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*			Y
28	Eurasian Spoonbill	*Platalea leucorodia*			Y
29	European Roller	*Coracias garrulus*	Y		
30	Glossy Ibis	*Plegadis falcinellus*			Y
31	Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*			Y
32	Great Egret	*Ardea alba*			Y
33	Great Grey Shrike	*Lanius excubitor*	Y	Y	
34	Greater Coucal	*Centropus sinensis*	Y		Y
35	Green Sandpiper	*Tringa ochropus*			Y
36	Grey Francolin	*Ortygornis pondicerianus*	Y	Y	
37	Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*			Y
38	Grey-headed Swamphen	*Porphyrio poliocephalus*			Y
39	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*	Y	Y	Y
40	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*		Y	Y
41	Indian Bushlark	*Plocealauda erythroptera*		Y	
42	Indian Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*			Y
43	Indian Paradise-Flycatcher	*Terpsiphone paradisi*	Y		
44	Indian Peafowl	*Pavo cristatus*			Y
45	Indian Pied Starling	*Gracupica contra*			Y
46	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*	Y		

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Rashin Grasslands	Karkhel, Baramati	Bhigwan
47	Indian Robin	*Copsychus fulicatus*		Y	Y
48	Indian Silverbill	*Euodice malabarica*		Y	Y
49	Indian Spot-billed Duck	*Anas poecilorhyncha*	Y		Y
50	Jungle Babbler	*Argya striata*		Y	
51	Jungle Myna	*Acridotheres fuscus*		Y	
52	Jungle Prinia	*Prinia sylvatica*		Y	Y
53	Large Grey Babbler	*Argya malcolmi*			Y
54	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*	Y	Y	Y
55	Lesser Whistling-Duck	*Dendrocygna javanica*			Y
56	Little Cormorant	*Microcarbo niger*			Y
57	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	Y		Y
58	Little Grebe	*Tachybaptus ruficollis*	Y		Y
59	Long-tailed Shrike	*Lanius schach*	Y	Y	
60	Medium Egret	*Ardea intermedia*			Y
61	Montagu's Harrier	*Circus pygargus*	Y	Y	
62	Northern Shoveler	*Spatula clypeata*			Y
63	Oriental Darter	*Anhinga melanogaster*			Y
64	Oriental Honey-buzzard	*Pernis ptilorhynchus*		Y	
65	Oriental Magpie Robin	*Copsychus saularis*		Y	Y
66	Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*			Y
67	Paddyfield Pipit	*Anthus rufulus*	Y	Y	
68	Painted Stork	*Mycteria leucocephala*			Y
69	Pallid Harrier	*Circus macrourus*	Y	Y	
70	Pied Bushchat	*Saxicola caprata*	Y	Y	Y
71	Pied Cuckoo	*Clamator jacobinus*			Y
72	Pied Kingfisher	*Ceryle rudis*			Y
73	Plain Prinia	*Prinia inornata*		Y	Y
74	Plum-headed Parakeet	*Psittacula cyanocephala*		Y	
75	Purple Heron	*Ardea purpurea*			Y
76	Purple Sunbird	*Cinnyris asiaticus*			Y
77	Red Avadavat	*Amandava amandava*		Y	Y
78	Red-naped Ibis	*Pseudibis papillosa*			Y
79	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*		Y	Y
80	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*	Y	Y	Y
81	River Tern	*Sterna aurantia*			Y
82	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	*Columba livia*	Y		Y
83	Rufous Treepie	*Dendrocitta vagabunda*			Y
84	Rufous-tailed Lark	*Ammomanes phoenicura*	Y	Y	
85	Scaly-breasted Munia	*Lonchura punctulata*		Y	Y
86	Shikra	*Tachyspiza badia*	Y	Y	
87	Short-toed Snake Eagle	*Circaetus gallicus*		Y	
88	Siberian Stonechat	*Saxicola maurus*	Y	Y	Y
89	Spotted Dove	*Spilopelia chinensis*		Y	
90	Tricolored Munia	*Lonchura malacca*			Y
91	Western Marsh Harrier	*Circus aeruginosus*	Y		Y
92	Whiskered Tern	*Chlidonias hybrida*			Y
93	White-breasted Waterhen	*Amaurornis phoenicurus*	Y		Y

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Rashin Grasslands	Karkhel, Baramati	Bhigwan
94	White-eyed Buzzard	*Butastur teesa*		Y	
95	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*		Y	Y
96	Wire-tailed Swallow	*Hirundo smithii*		Y	Y
97	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus malabaricus*		Y	

NOVEMBER 2025					
Sl No	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**	**Kadbanwadi Grasslands**	**Ujani Dam / Takrarwadi / Madanwadi**	**Rashin Outskirts**
1	Ashy Prinia	*Prinia socialis*	Y	Y	
3	Asian Green Bee-eater	*Merops orientalis*	Y	Y	Y
4	Asian Koel	*Eudynamys scolopaceus*		Y	
5	Asian Openbill	*Anastomus oscitans*	Y	Y	
6	Asian Woolly-necked Stork	*Ciconia episcopus*	Y		
7	Bar-headed Goose	*Anser indicus*		Y	
8	Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*			Y
9	Baya Weaver	*Ploceus philippinus*	Y		
10	Bay-backed Shrike	*Lanius vittatus*	Y		Y
11	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*	Y	Y	Y
12	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	Y	Y	Y
13	Black-headed Ibis	*Threskiornis melanocephalus*		Y	Y
14	Black-tailed Godwit	*Limosa limosa*		Y	
15	Black-winged Kite	*Elanus caeruleus*	Y	Y	Y
16	Black-winged Stilt	*Himantopus himantopus*	Y	Y	Y
17	Blue Rock Thrush	*Monticola solitarius*	Y		
18	Blyth's Reed Warbler	*Acrocephalus dumetorum*	Y		
19	Brahminy Kite	*Haliastur indus*		Y	
20	Brahminy Starling	*Sturnia pagodarum*	Y	Y	
21	Brown-headed Gull	*Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus*		Y	
22	Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse	*Pterocles exustus*	Y		Y
23	Common Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	Y	Y	Y
24	Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*		Y	
25	Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*	Y	Y	Y
26	Common Sandpiper	*Actitis hypoleucos*	Y	Y	
27	Common Tailorbird	*Orthotomus sutorius*		Y	
28	Desert Wheatear	*Oenanthe deserti*			Y
29	Eastern Cattle Egret	*Ardea coromanda*	Y	Y	Y
30	Eastern Red-rumped Swallow	*Cecropis daurica*			Y
31	Eurasian Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	Y		Y
32	Eurasian Coot	*Fulica atra*		Y	
33	Eurasian Curlew	*Numenius arquata*		Y	
34	Eurasian Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	Y		Y
35	Eurasian Spoonbill	*Platalea leucorodia*	Y	Y	Y
36	Eurasian Wigeon	*Mareca penelope*		Y	
37	Glossy Ibis	*Plegadis falcinellus*	Y	Y	
38	Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*		Y	
39	Great Egret	*Ardea alba*	Y	Y	
40	Great Grey Shrike	*Lanius excubitor*	Y		Y

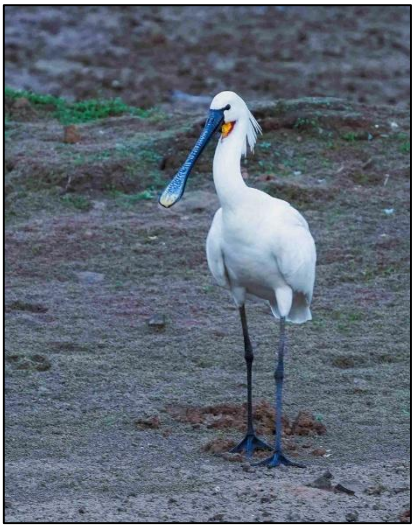
Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Kadbanwadi Grasslands	Ujani Dam / Takrarwadi / Madanwadi	Rashin Outskirts
41	Greater Coucal	*Centropus sinensis*	Y	Y	Y
42	Greater Spotted Eagle	*Clanga clanga*	Y	Y	
43	Greater White-fronted Goose	*Anser albifrons*		Y	
44	Green Sandpiper	*Tringa ochropus*	Y		Y
45	Grey Francolin	*Ortygornis pondicerianus*	Y		
46	Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*		Y	Y
47	Grey-headed Swamphen	*Porphyrio poliocephalus*		Y	
48	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*	Y	Y	Y
49	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	Y	Y	Y
50	Indian Bushlark	*Plocealauda erythroptera*	Y		Y
51	Indian Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*	Y	Y	
52	Indian Courser	*Cursorius coromandelicus*	Y		Y
53	Indian Peafowl	*Pavo cristatus*		Y	
54	Indian Pied Starling	*Gracupica contra*		Y	
55	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*	Y	Y	Y
56	Indian Robin	*Copsychus fulicatus*	Y	Y	Y
57	Indian Silverbill	*Euodice malabarica*	Y		
58	Indian Spot-billed Duck	*Anas poecilorhyncha*		Y	
59	Jungle Myna	*Acridotheres fuscus*		Y	
60	Large Grey Babbler	*Argya malcolmi*	Y	Y	Y
61	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*		Y	
62	Laughing Dove	*Spilopelia senegalensis*	Y	Y	Y
63	Lesser Whistling-Duck	*Dendrocygna javanica*		Y	
64	Lesser Whitethroat	*Curruca curruca*	Y		
65	Little Cormorant	*Microcarbo niger*		Y	Y
66	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	Y	Y	Y
67	Little Grebe	*Tachybaptus ruficollis*		Y	
68	Little Ringed Plover	*Thinornis dubius*	Y		
69	Long-tailed Shrike	*Lanius schach*	Y	Y	Y
70	Medium Egret	*Ardea intermedia*		Y	
71	Mongolian Short-toed Lark	*Calandrella dukhunensis*	Y		Y
72	Montagu's Harrier	*Circus pygargus*	Y		Y
73	Northern Pintail	*Anas acuta*		Y	
74	Northern Shoveler	*Spatula clypeata*		Y	
75	Oriental Darter	*Anhinga melanogaster*		Y	Y
76	Oriental Magpie Robin	*Copsychus saularis*		Y	
77	Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*		Y	
78	Paddyfield Pipit	*Anthus rufulus*	Y		
79	Painted Francolin	*Francolinus pictus*	Y		
80	Painted Sandgrouse	*Pterocles indicus*	Y		Y
81	Painted Stork	*Mycteria leucocephala*	Y	Y	Y
82	Pallid Harrier	*Circus macrourus*	Y		Y
83	Pied Bushchat	*Saxicola caprata*	Y	Y	
84	Purple Heron	*Ardea purpurea*		Y	
85	Purple Sunbird	*Cinnyris asiaticus*	Y	Y	Y

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Kadbanwadi Grasslands	Ujani Dam / Takrarwadi / Madanwadi	Rashin Outskirts
86	Purple-rumped Sunbird	*Leptocoma zeylonica*	Y		
87	Red Avadavat	*Amandava amandava*	Y		
88	Red Collared Dove	*Streptopelia tranquebarica*	Y		
89	Red-naped Ibis	*Pseudibis papillosa*	Y	Y	
90	Red-necked Falcon	*Falco chicquera*			Y
91	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*	Y	Y	Y
92	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*	Y	Y	Y
93	River Tern	*Sterna aurantia*		Y	
94	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	*Columba livia*	Y		Y
95	Rose-ringed Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri*	Y	Y	Y
96	Rosy Starling	*Pastor roseus*	Y	Y	Y
97	Ruddy Shelduck	*Tadorna ferruginea*		Y	
98	Rufous Treepie	*Dendrocitta vagabunda*		Y	
99	Scaly-breasted Munia	*Lonchura punctulata*	Y	Y	
100	Shikra	*Tachyspiza badia*	Y	Y	
101	Siberian Stonechat	*Saxicola maurus*	Y	Y	Y
102	Spotted Dove	*Spilopelia chinensis*	Y	Y	Y
103	Spotted Owlet	*Athene brama*	Y	Y	
104	Tawny Lark	*Galerida deva*	Y		
105	Tawny Pipit	*Anthus campestris*	Y		Y
106	Tree Pipit	*Anthus trivialis*	Y		Y
107	Western Marsh Harrier	*Circus aeruginosus*	Y	Y	Y
108	Western Yellow Wagtail	*Motacilla flava*	Y	Y	
109	Whiskered Tern	*Chlidonias hybrida*		Y	
110	White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba*	Y		
111	White-breasted Waterhen	*Amaurornis phoenicurus*	Y	Y	
112	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	Y	Y	
113	Wire-tailed Swallow	*Hirundo smithii*		Y	
114	Wood Sandpiper	*Tringa glareola*	Y		Y

Some other photos taken during the trips:

Eurasian Kestrel drying off after the rains

Eurasian Kestrel doing a wing stretch



Eurasian Spoonbill

Painted Sandgrouse male

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse pair

Montagu's Harrier male

Pallid Harrier female

Siberian Stonechat

Eurasian Hoopoe

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LEARNING TO LOOK UP

Srikanth Bhamidipati

Nobody plans to become a birdwatcher.

There is no orientation session. No sign-up form. No moment where someone hands you binoculars and says, *"Welcome, this is your life now."*

Birdwatching happens quietly. Gradually. Often against your will.

It usually starts with a question that seems harmless enough. "What bird is that?"

This question is dangerous.

Because once you ask about it, you notice that birds exist. And once you notice birds, you realise they are always there watching you rush around, stare at screens, walk past trees without looking up. Which is awkward, because they seem to be doing just fine without our attention.

Birdwatching begins with looking up.

Which feels strange at first. Slightly risky. Like you're about to walk onto a lamppost.

But when you look up, the world changes.

Take the Red-vented Bulbul.

You've seen it a thousand times. On balconies. In gardens. On that one plant you forgot to water. You probably never thought much of it. But once you start watching, you realise the bulbul is a professional multitasker – singing, fighting rivals, scolding cats, and somehow always appearing in photographs you didn't mean to take.

Bulbuls are often the first birds people truly *notice*. Not because they are rare, but because they are unapologetically present. And that's how birdwatching begins, not with the exotic, but with the familiar.

Then there are crows.

Ah yes. The birds everyone claims to hate, until they actually start watching them.

Crows are brilliant. Problem-solvers. Strategists. Entire research papers have been written about their intelligence, while they casually steal food, recognise human faces, and remember grudges longer than most people.

Once you start birdwatching, you stop calling them "just crows." You start calling them *suspiciously clever*. You realise they hold meetings on electric poles. You suspect they know more than they're letting on.

And then there are sparrows.

Or rather, the absence of sparrows.

For many people, sparrows were childhood background noise, chirping from rooftops, hopping around courtyards, completely unremarkable. Which is why their disappearance felt strange only in hindsight.

Birdwatching teaches you that the most important losses are often the quietest ones. When sparrows vanish, something fundamental has shifted. Urban design, pollution, food sources are things you never thought about and suddenly matter.

Birdwatching makes the invisible visible.

Of course, no journey into noticing birds is complete without confronting a Blue Rock Pigeon.

Yes, that pigeon.

The one everyone complains about. The one accused of being boring, dirty, and overly confident and yet, once you actually watch pigeons, you realise they are extraordinary navigators, loyal partners, and deeply committed parents.

They thrive where humans thrive. They adapt faster than most species. And frankly, they have survived things we haven't even documented yet.

Birdwatching humbles you that way. It forces you to reassess who you've been dismissing.

And then comes the moment of delight.

A sunbird hovering briefly like a jewel with wings, visiting flowers you didn't even know had nectar. Suddenly, that random plant on your balcony becomes important. You water it more carefully. You protect it. Because now, it's not just a plant – it's a food source.

Birdwatching turns ordinary spaces into ecosystems.

And sometimes, it surprises you entirely.

Like the first time you spot a Barn Owl.

Silent. Pale. Watching from a beam or tree at dusk, looking like it stepped out of a myth. You won't forget that moment. Ever. And suddenly, nights feel alive in ways they never did before.

Birdwatching does that. It expands your sense of time. Of a place. Of who else is sharing the world with you?

Here's the secret: birdwatching isn't really about birds.

It's about attention.

In a world addicted to speed, birdwatching rewards slowness. Birds do not cooperate with urgency. They arrive late, leave early, hide behind leaves, and reappear only after you've given up and sat down.

This lesson teaches patience. And humility. Mostly humility.

It also teaches joy.

The joy of recognising a bird without looking it up.

The joy of hearing a call and knowing who said it.

The joy of being wrong, corrected gently, and learning anyway.

And then something sneaky happens.

You start to care.

Once you notice birds, you notice when they're missing. A bulbul doesn't sing where it used to. Sparrows don't return. A tree feels quieter than it should be. This is how birdwatching quietly becomes conservation without slogans, without speeches.

Birdwatchers are often the first to notice changes. Not because they are experts, but because they pay attention.

Of course, birdwatching has its challenges.

Habitats are shrinking. Cities are louder. Green spaces are fenced off. Sometimes you go to your favourite spot only to find construction instead. The birds, understandably, have moved on.

There is also social media where birdwatching occasionally turns competitive. Rare birds attract crowds. Silence becomes optional. Someone plays the bird calls loudly on a speaker.

The bird leaves. Everyone looks confused.

Despite all this, birdwatching endures. Because it offers something radical: **connection without consumption**.

You don't take anything. You don't buy anything. You don't fix anything. You simply observe. In a world obsessed with ownership, this feels quietly rebellious.

This is also why birdwatching is powerful for children.

Teaching kids to watch birds isn't about names. It's about observation. About sitting quietly. About noticing details. About learning that patience often leads to rewards.

A child who learns to watch birds learns empathy early. They learn that the world does not revolve around them—and that's a good thing.

Birdwatching also erases the hierarchy. Out in the field, no one cares what you do for a living. A student and a scientist will get equally excited about the same sunbird. Knowledge is shared freely. Mistakes are laughed at. Everyone remembers their first confident misidentification.

And slowly, birdwatchers became guardians.

On a balcony.

Of a tree. Of a park. Of a lake.

They speak up when something changes—not because they are activists, but because they notice.

In a distracted world, birdwatching offers something rare: grounded hope.

Not loud hope. Quiet hope.

The belief that attention matters. That noticing accumulates. That care does not require grand gestures; sometimes it just requires looking up.

You don't need binoculars to begin with. You don't need knowledge. You don't need permission.

Birds will meet you where you are – on wires, rooftops, drains, trees, and traffic signals. They are remarkably accommodating that way.

All you have to do is look up.

And once you do, you may realise something unsettling and wonderful: The world never stops being interesting.

We just stopped noticing.

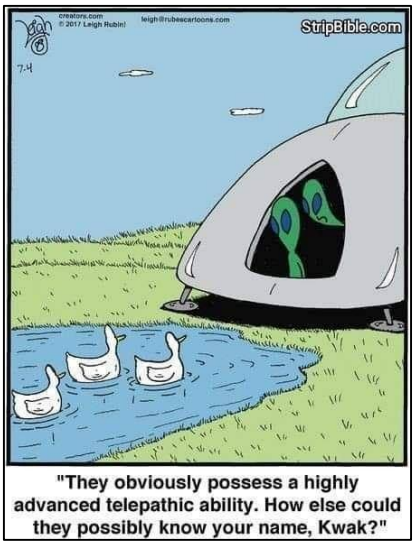
Learning to look up isn't about escaping reality. It's about reconnecting with it.

And in such a noisy, hurried world, that might well be one of the most important skills we can relearn.

* * *

Bird Humour

Umesh Mani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leigh@rubescartoons.com
StripBible.com
"They obviously possess a highly advanced telepathic ability. How else could they possibly know your name, Kwak?"

(From Facebook, August 19, 2022)

* * *

Bird of the Month

Text and Photos: Umesh Mani

Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*)

Bluethroat adult (L) (Bikaner, Rajasthan, November 18, 2023) **& 1st winter (R)** (Nalsarovar, Gujarat, January 01, 2026)

Order:	Passeriformes
Family:	Muscicapidae
Genus:	*Luscinia*
Species:	*L. svecica*
Size:	15 cm
IUCN Status:	Least Concern

Description & distribution: The Bluethroat is a small passerine member of the Old World flycatcher family that occurs widely across Europe and Asia, while in North America it is restricted to northern and western parts of Alaska and the Yukon. It breeds in most parts of Europe and northern Asia, while it winters in the Iberian peninsula, northern half of Africa, and south Asia, including India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. There are eleven sub-species, of which only one, *L. s. abbotti*, breeds within the Indian subcontinent limits (Gilgit, Baltistan, Ladakh and Kashmir).

The adult male has a brilliant blue throat and breast, with a white or chestnut patch in the middle, while the female and young male show only a gorget of brown spots across the white breast. Upper parts are olive brown, and it has a whitish or buff supercilium and black moustachial stripes. Additionally, the female may also show a sub-moustachial stripe. In flight or when spread, a black-tipped orange-chestnut tail is prominent. The male breeding plumage is brightest in spring and summer; after the summer moult, the fresh new feathers have pale tips which obscure the throat pattern. These tips then abrade in late winter and early spring to reveal the brighter and more colourful bases of the feathers.

Habitat & behaviour: The Bluethroat is usually seen singly on damp ground, flower-strewn grass under flowering trees, reedy tank margins, and sugarcane fields. It is a sprightly, robin-like bird which nevertheless is a skulker, often moving through tangled bushes and underbrush or hopping around quietly with cocked tail and drooping wings as it forages, stopping now and then to pick up an insect. Its diet consists mainly of caterpillars, tiny beetles and other insects. Its winter call is a harsh, quiet *chur-r* or *chuck chuck*, while in the breeding season, it utters a sweet, loud song from an open perch.

Nesting: In Ladakh, the Bluethroat breeds mainly during June and July. The nest is usually a deep cup of dry grass on wet ground, hidden amongst grass and scrub. The usual clutch consists of 3 or 4 olive-green to olive-brown eggs, minutely flecked all over with dull reddish spots.

Local name: The Bluethroat is known as *'Nyul hot'* in Kashmiri, *'Nil kanthi'* or *'Hussaini pidda'* in Hindi, *'Nil kanthi piddi'* in Punjabi and *'Gunpigera'* or *'Gurpeorah'* in Bengali.

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For information, write to: Deccan Birders, PO Box 45, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad – 500034. **Website:** www.deccanbirders.in. **E-group:** http://groups.google.co.in/group/deccanbirders. **Society membership** (in Rs.): Annual: 500 per annum; Student: 200 per annum; Corporate: 2000 per annum; Life: 3000. (*Add Rs 75 for outstation cheques.)*